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C O N F I D E N T I A L ZAGREB 001709

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR EUR/SCE AND IO/UNP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/29/2008

TAGS: [PREL](#) [HR](#) [UNGA](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA SEEKS BILATERAL MEETING WITH SECRETARY  
POWELL DURING UNGA

CLASSIFIED BY: DCM PATRICK S. MOON FOR REASONS 1.5 (B) AND (D)

1. (SBU) ON JULY 29, DCM MET WITH VICE SKRACIC, HEAD OF THE  
MFA'S UN DEPARTMENT. SKRACIC PRESENTED THE GOC'S FORMAL  
REQUEST FOR A BILATERAL MEETING WITH SECRETARY POWELL FOR  
CROATIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TONINO PICULA DURING THIS YEAR'S  
UNGA. SKRACIC SAID THAT THE GOC UNDERSTANDS HOW BUSY THE  
SECRETARY WILL BE AND THAT IF A MEETING ON THE MARGINS OF

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UNGA IS NOT POSSIBLE, PICULA IS READY TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON  
EITHER IMMEDIATELY BEFORE OR AFTER THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.  
PICULA NOW PLANS TO BE IN NEW YORK FROM SEPTEMBER 22 - 26,  
BUT WOULD BE READY TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON EITHER ON  
SEPTEMBER 18 - 19 OR SEPTEMBER 29 - 30 FOR A MEETING WITH THE  
SECRETARY. SKRACIC UNDERSTOOD THAT SCHEDULES WILL TAKE TIME

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TO FORMULATE, BUT ASKED FOR AN EARLY RESPONSE SO CROATIA'S  
EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON CAN BEGIN WORK ON A PROGRAM OF OTHER  
SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS FOR THE MINISTER.

2. (SBU) SKRACIC SAID THAT THE MAIN SUBJECTS OF DISCUSSION  
WOULD BE CROATIA'S CONTRIBUTION OF TROOPS TO IRAQ, A POSSIBLE  
COMPROMISE FORMULA ON ARTICLE 98/ICC AND COUNTERTERRORISM.  
THE DCM TOLD SKRACIC THAT WE WOULD FORWARD THE GOC REQUEST.  
HE NOTED THAT DURING A BUSY TIME LIKE THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY,  
SENIOR U.S. OFFICIALS OFTEN HELD THEMATIC MEETINGS WITH  
GROUPINGS OF REGIONAL LEADERS. IN THIS REGARD, HE ASKED  
WHETHER CROATIA'S PARLIAMENT WOULD APPROVE BEFORE PICULA'S  
TRIP A PLANNED DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS TO IRAQ. SKRACIC SAID HE  
WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE PARLIAMENT WOULD APPROVE THE  
DEPLOYMENT IN ADVANCE OF THE MINISTER'S TRIP.

3. (SBU) SKRACIC ASKED THAT WE EXPLORE THE POSSIBILITY OF A  
PHOTO OPPORTUNITY FOR CROATIAN PRESIDENT MESIC WITH PRESIDENT  
BUSH. MESIC NOW PLANS TO ARRIVE IN NEW YORK ON SEPTEMBER 21  
AND INTENDS TO DEPART BY THE END OF THE WEEK.

POST RECOMMENDATION

4. (C) WE DO NOT SEE JUSTIFICATION FOR A PHOTO OPPORTUNITY  
FOR PRESIDENT MESIC, EXCEPT PERHAPS AS PART OF A GROUP  
PHOTOGRAPH (PERHAPS OF ADRIATIC CHARTER COUNTRIES OR OF  
COUNTRIES WHICH ARE PROVIDING TROOPS TO IRAQ). LIKEWISE WE  
DO SEE ENOUGH JUSTIFICATION FOR A PRIVATE BILATERAL MEETING  
WITH FM PICULA, ALTHOUGH WE WOULD SUPPORT HIS PARTICIPATION  
IN A MEETING OF REGIONAL LEADERS WITH SENIOR USG OFFICIALS.  
FRANK

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